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RUSH TABOO.

BY

SUNDOWN.

NEW-YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1848.

158.

R U S H T A B O O .

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INVOCATION TO THE PRESS.

I.

I strike a harp of untried strings :—
It answers wild,
Like Nature's child—
An angel opes his silken wings,
And flies to meet
My coming feet ;
And hush'd I wait with trembling breath
To hear the doom of life or death.

II.

What is a harp of few short strings !
Whereon in vain
I wake a strain ?
If yonder angel chiding flings
Tornadoes o'er
The Public shore,
A million waves will backward roll
Their mountain vengeance on my soul.



R U S H T A B O O .

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

“MUSE, O Muse, inspire”—What!—And must it be?
Dare not my aping pinions fly away!—
O thou, Columbia, seize the lyre to thee,
And guard the fortunes of this humble lay:
Immortal bards, with charms for ever blazing,
Have lit their flaming tombs and cannot die:
And set their halos where the world is gazing,
With stars of fiction from a fancy sky—
Give them one glimpse of thy most common things,
And they will blush for paper gods and kings.

II.

And oh! thou Muse! who lead’st the giddy dance!
And charm’st us mortals with thy mellow lute!
Oft are those soothing moments but a trance,
From which we wake to misery acute:
Thy silken numbers weave a velvet lawn,
Where fiery passions snatch illicit use;
Allure to steal one trembling kiss upon,
And break the heart for life!—Oh, Muse!—Oh, Muse!—
Is it for these you teach the liquid line?
For such as these does Mount Parnassus shine?

III.

Yes—such the Grecian Muse—and from Parnassus flows
 Eternal streams to irrigate the heart ;
 She hides a thousand thorns 'neath ev'ry rose ;
 Allures to pluck, and kills us with the smart.
 Who then can fly without the Grecian Nine,
 And hope to scale the Paradise of Fame ?
 Columbia may erect a purer shrine—
 Here bards invoke her independent name—
 Her broader beauties all the world has seen—
 Here Genius will be what she has not been.

IV.

Byron!—thou most perfection!—Byron, tell !
 Oh ! why that cruel suicidal deed ?
 Thou who could'st soar to God, why swoop to Hell,
 And leave us only raptures that must bleed !
 Thou who with numbers sweet, and chaste, and soft,
 Could'st weave a silken net around the heart ;
 Could'st wing a world to the Ethereal loft,
 Why art thou—shrieking ghost—the wretch thou art !
 And why—thou comet of the upper sky—
 Didst quench thy brightest beams in filth !—Say why ?

V.

As thus I wondered of the mighty dead,
 Musing beneath a vine-clad bower ;
 The rustling leaves bent o'er my leaning head,
 And doubtful twilight darkened in the hour ;
 Came there a beauteous bird with plumes exotic,
 Graceful as a fairy and as lovely ;
 Notes like the mourning-dove eoliotic,
 And so the charming beauty perched above me :
 There as the night stole o'er my rapt attention,
 The Grecian Muse thus spoke my apprehension :

VI.

“ ‘Tis not the Poet nor the Muse who err,
 Their sweetest anthems are for ever free ;
 But men will have the lewdness they prefer,
 And chase an instant bliss to damned Eternity.
 Man must be tickled with some little hair,
 And run the downy thistle as it ’s blown ;
 Rush for each bubble till it bursts in air,
 And then he tumbles like some shallow clown—
 Just like the moth to blazing fire he flies,
 And like the silly moth adheres and dies.

VII.

“ Fiction is whipped and spurred around the course,
 Till all his life is blown and puffed away ;
 His apron ears hang listless o’er the horse,
 And sleepy eyes close out the light of day ;
 His lean lank side a snailly progress makes,
 With some rude ploughboy on his back ;
 A sightless distance from the winning stakes,
 His panting dullness tumbles on the track—
 With which an ox-team trails some river’s bed,
 In which he sinks like worthless dross of lead.

VIII.

“ To bright Parnassus look ! whose snows, and clouds,
 In chaste embrace eternal grandeur show ;
 There is no Vestal will approach their shrouds,
 But all are dallying with the charms below.
 What can the Muses else when pressed by Glory ;
 Or what can Glory do when readers sleep !
 But show some villain fleshed and gory !
 Or o’er the harp of ready passions sweep !—
 A whole cotillion waits us in the blood ;
 To pour out dance and music like a flood]

IX.

“ The golden flagon must be rich with wine,
 Seduction fragrant in the bright saloon ;
 The sparkling cups must fascinating shine,
 And drowsy Night be changed to dancing Noon :
 Then to some chamber lead a willing pair,
 With music floating round the toys they do ;
 There charm the world with a secluded hour,
 And teach forgetfulness and ruin too :
 Then gratitude your monument shall raise ;
 To which the World will turn, and bow, and gaze.

X.

“ And Poets must beyond the deep blue sea
 Take inspiration from the Mountain Muse ;
 There is no fount this side the briny way,
 Where crystal draughts Ethereal Life infuse.
 The Gods there habitate.—Those chosen fields
 They charm and glorify for Mighty Deeds ;
 There thund’ring Jove his lightning sceptre wields,
 And ev’ry Hero lives, and loves, and bleeds :
 There Nectar sparkles by the Gods distilled,
 And thence, and thence alone the world is filled.¹

XI.

“ Cloud-crowned Parnassus² is our loved abode,
 Where swan-like Concords nest, and sweetly sing ;
 There they brood charms for each melodious Ode,
 And plume and pinion ev’ry cygnet wing.
 From Age to Age, since older Years were young,
 The Muse still hovered o’er its rugged brakes ;
 And softly, sweetly, Heavenly she sung
 To waft her beauties o’er its bays and lakes :
 And melody confessed, shall never spring
 From any meaner place, or meaner thing.

XII.

“ If you would cull the mellow luscious fruit,
 Whose fragrance bends the bows of Heavenly lorc ;
 You must enlist a Phœbus-winged recruit,
 And burn, and shine as Bards have shone before :
 And if you would enchant the list’ning ear,
 And subjugate attention while you write ;
 Your Native Land must only claim a tear,
 Arise and bid your ‘ Native Land good night ’—
 Then may you gather Fame’s immortal right,
 And chain the world in raptures of delight.

XIII.

“ Restrain thy scorn—Thou wounded soul ! why not ?
 What is thy land but wretchedness to thee ?
 Should’st thou breathe feelings of a Patriot,
 When naught but ravishing thy hopes is free ?
 E’en Justice seizes the assassin’s harms,
 And blind to all the proofs that shine,
 She prostitutes her unsuspected charms
 To those who ruthless plunder thee and thine—
 Among thy ligaments of love they carve,
 And fling your children out to beg, or starve.

XIV.

“ Then sing thy ‘ Native Land good night ’—Arise,
 Turn all thy soul to bitter hate and fly :
 Thy Native (cruel) Land thou should’st despise,
 And I will waft thee to a fairer sky :
 There is a Cloud of Incense ready burned,
 Attendant chariot to my desire,
 Where you may, seated, soar among the learned,
 And shine a Star of radiating fire—
 Then sing thy ‘ Native Land good night,’ and soar
 Where wingless serpents can attack no more.”

XV.

Her downy splendors now their rest restore,
 And give attendant ears to my reply ;
 She knew that hounds were feasting on my gore,
 I saw it beaming in her conscious eye :
 She knew that falsehood, with a serpent's sting,
 Upon my breast had stolen strength to kill ;
 She saw the reptile and the meaner thing
 Uprear the life I gave my blood to spill ;
 She saw their hissing heads in madness round,
 And saw them strike and poison ev'ry wound.

XVI.

Here, then, was sympathy to be approved,
 Charged with the kindness of a good intent ;
 Yet such base counsels must be still reproved,
 Though all her facts obtain my full assent—
 For she forgot, and men, too, do forget
 That there are mortals will not bend or fly ;
 When rushing Winds a quaking. World upset,
 The man I love will either stand or die :
 And when his babes cut up, excruciating cry ;
 True, then, the heart must break—but yet defy.

XVII.

And thus from me—(My aching heart was crushed,
 And all my curdled blood was frozen there ;
 But yet it melted, and in fever rushed
 The worst of wretchedness to meet and dare)—
 “ My Native Land, good night ! ”—No—Dead and chill,
 Though she were seated at the frozen Pole,
 I'd swear upon her ice to love her still,
 And hug her desolation to my soul—
 Then keep thy blandishments to tempt a slave,
 Death has a kinder friendship in the grave.

XVIII.

“ My Native Land, good night !”—Cause robbers prize !—
 A self-respect compels me to forgive ;
 They are too base for better men to hate—
 Then let the guilty wretches crawl and live—
 If I possessed Olympian power of Jove,
 Could wield his Lightning Thunders at my will ;
 I would no gleam from out the Realms Above ;
 There is baseness that’s too mean to kill—
 Fester the wretch—be robbers if they will,
 But thou, My Native Land, I love thee still.

XIX.

“ My Native Lad, good night !”—You know me not,
 Or would not venture on that stormy main ;
 Hang me and min in chains to die and rot,
 The least of all my Clan would die again—
 “ My Native Land, good night !”—No Torrid Ire
 Can wean or driv me from the Land I love ;
 Though but the cinders of consuming Fire
 My outraged ashes on you never move :
 Though falsest Hell drie deep its sharpest thrill,
 My own, My Native Lad, I love thee still.

XX.

And list my Muse of Greece and sung in Rome,
 To new-fledged Truth that sings along the sky ;
 You may delight in your trascendent Home,
 Then why not I in mine ?—Yes, tell me why ?—
 I know that Greece was Great, and many more ;
 But Greatness then was just a sucking child,
 Pleased with the fancy of an infant lore—
 Behold him striding now an encess Wild—
 Bounding beyond the playthings of nurse,
 To build, and use this Lofty Univer.

XXI.

Yes, thou Columbia!—Infinity how vast!
 Where scenes eternally expand in green;
 Where Nature spreads her countless charms at lat,
 And endless Rivers carry Worlds between!
 Thou seek'st no Mountain Muse to spread thy Fame,
 For Time stands tugging at the trumpet's roa';
 And ev'ry Grecian Fiction, Mount, and Name
 Your millponds would receive and not run 'er—
 Epochs and Ages gape around thy Youth;
 To see their Fictions distanced by the Truth!

XXII.

The Eagle's eyrie on the highest steep
 Looks down upon the storm and sea blow;
 Beholds the Clouds attack the angry Dep,
 And each contending Wind a tempet blow;
 Sees the mad Waves dash up their foming rage,
 And spout their wrath upon the Cuds above;
 Sees Man's imperial Fleets approaching to engage,
 Torn and dismantled where they would have strove:
 And then behold! like melting flæs of snow
 The ragged masses are ingulfed blow!

XXIII.

And there she rears o'er all tat rude Abyss
 Her little eaglets in their port and play,
 Whose callow brood inhalen unfledged bliss
 To see the Clouds surmanted by the spray;
 And when fierce Lightnings crinkle in the Night,
 And Thunders leap aong the tumbling rocks;
 They see the hashing Elements with proud delight,
 While Man's best hoes are drowned beneath the shocks:
 And then she, screamg, flaps o'er all that's done,
 And soars her blinkss eye to meet the Sun.

XXIV.

So must Columbia mount the highest air,
 And pierce her searching eye through ev'ry Realm ;
 Observe the prowling wrongs that burrow there,
 And swooping all those cannibals o'erwhelm—
 The charm of Poesy let her employ
 To waft among the Nations and their pains ;
 To sing in ev'ry tongue a jubilee of joy,
 And beat the tyrants with their shivered chains—
 Such be the Muse to whom I humbly pray,
 For one faint ray of coming perfect day.

XXV.

And now my Lady Greek, were I inclined
 To call your fancies to a strict account,
 Your own Tartarus would be too confined
 For half the crimes of your Celestial Mount—
 In gross, if you allow the jurisdiction,
 You'll plead to this—found true—indictment ;
 When your creating power had no restriction,
 Why crowd your Gods with passion's base excitement ?—
 The lowest, vilest, meanest of our race,
 In hate and lust than Gods are much less base.

XXVI.

First your Uranus took fictitious life,
 Brain-formed like Venus from the ocean-foam ;
 And her the Latin Terra took to wife
 To breed Celestials for the time to come ;
 But happier far Reality had been
 If you the teeming thought had ne'er essayed,
 Nor bred examples for the sons of men,
 Of rape, of robbery, and Truth betrayed ;
 But left Celestial portals closed and free,
 For wiser fictions of futurity.

XXVII.

See what affection you have shadowed forth
 In your example of the Titan strife,
 When babes were crammed between the rocks of earth,
 By the Immortal Father of their life ;
 Whereat the vixen Mother, chafed and mad,
 Devised all sorts of torture for her spouse—
 Inspired by thee the roughest steel was glad
 To all his haggling cruelty arouse,
 And yield the sickle—Think thou, modest Muse,
 How could you form such tool for such base use !

XXVIII.

Then Saturn, mindful of the fate he gave,
 Inspired by Vice to save the ravished crown ;
 In his own bosom dug his children's grave,
 In hopes to swallow all succession down—
 But Oh ! ingenious Muse !—Thy lofty art !—
 Nor men nor Gods can measure arms with thee—
 Just like a pie, or some delicious tart,
 Or luscious dainty of the honey-bee ;
 You fed the cheated God with granite stones,
 And saved for baby Gods their flesh and bones.

XXIX.

Next rose the Thund'rer—Jupiter—And then
 Another Father robbed of that same throne !—
 By thee invested ruling Gods, and men,
 As if the Universe were all his own ;
 And beasts, and birds, and zephyrs as they blow,
 Seized by the wanton God to pander shame ;
 With all the powers that Nature knows below
 Are mowing virtue for illicit flame—
 Such are the favors of an ancient Nine !
 And such as those are canonized Divine !

XXX.

* * * * *

A virgin bathing at her sweet sixteen,
 Her maids were straying in the chestnut grove ;
 Enticed to pluck the fragrant wintergreen,
 And leave their mistress in the secret cove—
 Jove on Olympus sets, and Gods deplore
 His wrath that lowers for some faction done ;
 Against their quaking souls his Thunders roar,
 But sink before they strike—for Gods may swoon—
 The Thunders fainted like some cooing dove,
 And Jove's whole soul was all absorbed in love.

XXXI.

He'd seen !—What had he seen ?—The shore might tell
 What Jove's hot blood was bounding there to reach ;
 The crazy liquid leaped, and skipped pell-mell
 Through all his veins and hurried to the beach—
 Her eyes that beamed a liquid soft desire,
 The cherry sweetness of that nectar lip ;
 Those downy hills still rising to retire,
 And all the charms where Cupid loves to sip,
 Stood there unveiled in innocent delight,
 And Jove unseen was feasting on the sight.

XXXII.

Jove knew—none better understood than he
 That each illicit dream to woe awakes,
 And may-be only meant to sly see
 The beauty that mortality partakes :
 If that !—why did the God so soon forget
 That cold resolves opposed to lusty fire,
 Will turn and leap the highest parapet
 To die in compassing one quick desire ?
 Yet there the burning God enchanted stood,
 With his own Lightnings creeping through the blood ;

XXXIII.

Till Earth, and Hell, and Heaven were forgot,
 And Jove stood trembling with a conscious vice ;
 Yet beauty bloomed and smiled and knew it not—
 Another Satan and a Paradise ;
 At last the lusty Jove Omnipotent,
 While she resumed her robes appeared a youth,
 Whose manly graces hoped a quick consent,
 Of favors talked yet swore eternal truth ;
 But her stern virtue—Angel of the fair—
 Looked through his craven soul and Jove was air.

XXXIV.

She spake not—but then her withering lip,
 Her brow, her eye, her soul pierced like a dart ;
 The wretch insulting felt the silent whip,
 When Virtue tore away her smitten heart—
 Love's holy altar is so pure a shrine,
 That he who truly kneels to worship there,
 Will light no lurid flame to kindle thine ;
 But rather quench emotion with a tear—
 Then speak not, maiden—tear away your soul,
 Though your own Cupid flits around the bowl.

XXXV.

'Twas then the laughing mirth of lofty joy
 Was heard on bounding feet to sing and talk ;
 Some happy tale their busy tongues employ,
 And like two lilies on a waving stalk
 Her maids approach, with each an offered hand,
 Set rich with ruby berries Sylva grows ;
 Like fleecy clouds they float along the strand,
 As chaste and dazzling as the frozen snows ;
 And yet the dimpling life like sparkling wine,
 In rosy blushes through their beauty shine.

XXXVI.

With nimble fingers and a perfect art,
 They robe their mistress like a Queen of May ;
 But yet the charming charms that win the heart,
 In curls and Cupids o'er her bosom play :
Each had a hope as brilliant to relate,
 As Joy has ever heard the good repeat ;
 With lustrous eyes they lit the fair debate,
 And homeward urged their busy rustling feet—
 Just then a horse came coursing o'er the plain,
 As if he flew ; without a curb or rein.

XXXVII.

I've heard of "milk-white steeds"—but he was white,
 With mane and tail that swept along the turf ;
 And gentler move than numbers can recite,
 He cantered o'er the green an ocean surf ;
 His wavy silver threads with ample sheen,
 Gave rich enchantment to the singing track ;
 Above, below, were rising, falling seen,
 And space sat motionless upon his back ;
 With gallop and curvet the horse appeared,
 To be admired but never to be feared.

XXXVIII.

And nearer still, and still more near he came,
 Displaying ev'ry smooth and glossy side ;
 And breathed perfume, and was so mild and tame,
 He almost asked the rosy girls to ride ;
 They twined some bouquets in his forehead tresses,
 And then he tossed them in his wanton play ;
 And there they seemed like wilted watercresses,
 Among the white foam of a silver sea ;
 He knelt before them with electric mane,
 And then he rose and tossed and pranced again.

XXXIX.

But still he came to play, and ev'ry time appeared
 More caressible, less restive, and less coy ;
 And when at last the blooming circle neared
 His eye seemed rational with inward joy ;
 He seemed to offer them his back, and kneeled—
 Whereat the maids inquired if each could dare
 To ride by turns, and lash the fragrant field
 With such delightful circles through the air ?
 And when he kneeled again upon the track,
 The mistress vaulted to his brawny back :

XL.

Then light and easy as the rising dew,
 He chose a prouder, grander dignity ;
 And as they moved to a delighted view,
 With her hilarious benignity ;
 A fairy sea seemed rolling its white foam,
 Which Neptune's Queen of Nymphs was sailing o'er ;
 And thus along the plain and o'er the hill they roam,
 But nearer, nearer to the ocean shore—
 The maids delighted with their peerless Gem,
 And that such circuits are reserved for them.

XLI.

Along that coast, just up the sloping hill,
 Fronting the Castle of the Lady's Sire,
 There was a hanging cliff where blood runs chill,
 Where life ne'er toppled off but to expire :
 The twain were circling for the castle gate,
 But in their circuit took the hanging rocks ;
 The maids admiring more their mistress' state. •
 A moving Iris, yet with flowing locks—
 But at the cliff he turned—one plunging leap,
 And horse and maid were buried in the deep.

* * * * *

*

XLII.

I said that they were buried in the deep—
 Better with truth if I could leave them there,
 But with an Eagle's pinion I must sweep,
 And save the maiden for a worse despair ;
 They plunged, 'tis true, but Cupid had been sent
 To post the Winds beneath that rugged brow ;
 And there, on willing wings, their shoulders bent,
 And safely wafted to the waves below :
 Whereon that courser and his charge were set,
 Without a jostle, or a slipper wet.

XLIII.

Out o'er the sea, from wave to wave they flew,
 On hoofs that barely touched their heaving tops ;
 Until a barren island rose to view,
 On which the charger sweeps and stops :
 And then the youth, whom she had seen before,
 With step elastic, and a smiling force,
 Approached the Lady on that houseless shore,
 And took the trembling beauty from the horse—
 There, 'neath a plane-tree shaded from the sun,
 I must not, will not tell you what was done.

XLIV.

And now, my Bird—Thou Queen Parnassian Hen,
 Can you be proud of this thy sampler jewel ?—
 I'd rather stir up porridge with my pen,
 And feed a dainty world on water-gruel—
 I'd rather be a tinker—back my kit,
 And trudge through wet, and mire, and storm, and sleet ;
 To mend old pans for some hard, mouldy bit,
 And lodge, from shed to shed, with unclad feet—
 All this, and ev'ry other colder crust,
 Before I'll pander for a meaner lust.

XLV.

And this is but a specimen you know ;
 Such as Geology might break away,
 And at some trespassing intruder throw ;
 Leaving the masses that still underlay—
 But those I garner ready to upfling,
 And if you press your meretricious gauds ;
 I'll summon Archimedes with his sling,
 To throw whole strata on you Mountain Bawds—
 A nobler Muse shall future Years present—
 Columbia beaming o'er the Firmament.

XLVI.

Now, as we part, if you will yet resist,
 And say Europa rode no flying horse ;
 Then I with modesty must still insist
 That such admission makes the matter worse.
 And can you “prove the Virgin rode a bull?”
 I'd rather hear the whole pronounced a sham ;
 'Twere not so bad to see an English trull,
 For her atonement riding a black ram—³
 O'er all such shows you have my leave to reign,
 But let Columbia strike some nobler strain.

XLVII.

The Night had closed on that uncommon scene
 Before she left me—that strange Classic Bird ;
 And nought intrusive came to intervene
 Between our list'ning thoughts and what they heard.
 Darkness herself was silent—had retired
 Before sweet Dian's silver-slippered light—
 Peered from behind the arbor, and admired
 The music and the lustre of the sight :
 Just then the Fairy Bird—and not too soon—
 Wafted her beauties to the modest Moon.

XLVIII.

Now, thou indulgent Reader, I admit,
 If you have come thus far you have been kind :
 My story not began, and yet I've writ—
 .What have I not—the story is behind—
 Just like the bee that hovers o'er the flower,
 Before he taps it for the waiting hive ;
 Or like the clouds that gather for a shower,
 Restraining bounties they are sure to give ;
 Or like the Autumn's ruby-tinting stripe,
 'That hangs long tempting ere the fruit is ripe.

XLIX.

And some is wasted—left to wither there,
 And hang a weary winter on the stem ;
 When the deserting leaves have left it bare,
 Through it the freezing Winds are sporting them :
 Such fate is mine—keen blows the freezing blast,
 And friendless leaves are flying on the gale ;
 To show men's hollow hearts, and teach at last
 That friends and Justice too are up for sale.
 But let it blow—drive on their coldest storms,
 I'll swim a cataract of ice and worms.

L.

* * * * *

Time was—no—Time was not—for darkness reigned,
 (And may be Time had better never been—
 What is the balance 'twixt the lost and gained—
 Does good or ill preponderate with Men ?
 I've known the ill—could reckon by the gross,
 The good as yet has flitted from my grasp ;
 Let those whose profit smiles above the loss,
 Whose hearts have felt no stinging of the wasp ;
 Let such the deep and doubtful question sound,
 And heal with fancied balm a real wound.)

LI.

Darkness, and silence, and a boundless space,
 Were stiller than Death—not a worm was there—
 No life was feasting on a fellow's face ;
 At least *no misery* was ev'ry where :
 Nothing but Power pervaded the expanse,
 For weal or woe, to be alone or build :
 And by the poising of that balanced chance,
 With what of happiness it deigns to yield—
 We have in this reality of years
 A boundless sea of wretchedness and tears.

LII.

But that lone Cause, by whatsoever name,
 For his own happiness and not for mine,
 Bade all the Systems hanging lights proclaim,
 Rise to their orbit altitudes and shine—
 Flown from his op'ning hand they there unfold
 The vast harmonious Glory of the Spheres ;
 And trace in salient characters of gold
 The truths of Systems, Seasons, and of Years—
 Of which one atom is the World we tread,
 On which we—less than specks—laugh, weep and dread.

LIII.

And earth was void—its mountains, seas, and mire,
 Then like a shapeless Jelly rolled around—
 Like iron melted from a blacksmith's fire,
 The scintillating mass with flame was bound—
 Time mounted on the burning heap, and there
 With his new scythe-stick beat the flames to hush ;
 To fit a spot where he might plant a year,
 And cultivate for an approaching rush :
 Enjoyed his burning toil, and laughed to know
 The fallow he was making he should mow.

LIV.

And when the infant Years had pith to bear,
 He put them all to labor at his plough ;
 Sowed thistles, nettles, corn, and Men and War,
 That they might eat, and run each other through ;
 And then he hung his scythe, and took the field ;
 And ere a smile could ripen on the heart,
 The fate of anxious Happiness was sealed,
 And it hung bleeding on the monster's cart—
 Such was the world—Behold her splendors now !
 Which none partake but only see the show.

LV.

* * * * *

'Bout four, or five, or fifty thousand years
 From when Time first began his dashing trade ;
 Where Kunadota o'er the ocean rears
 His lofty brow, there was an op'ning glade—
 You say your "map shows no such hill"—I know—
 But when you labor up his rugged side,
 And frighten at the gulfs that roll below,
 Then turn where forests westward endless stride,
 Where Native Red Men run from sea to sea—
 Then name your puny plaything maps to me.

LVI.

There was a glade that looked upon the Sea,
 And then around upon the Glorious West ;
 And all the Circuit-like Eternity,
 In living endless Grandeur stood confessed ;
 And on that height a Castle !—No—Away
 With Castles—There's a Lodge of smooth birch bark—
 But stands more proud than all your painted clay,
 Reared by the Magic of an hour's work—
 It has no debts to pay, and none to fear ;
 And fire and plunder make no havoc there.

LVII.

I'd like to hear some portly Palace tell
 The secret list'nings of its walls and pillows—
 There is no storm that swallows wrecks so fell,
 Or heaves so wretchedly as bosom billows—
 Where Fashion crowns him like an Autoocrat,
 And dictates to his slave he shall or shan't ;
 Compels obedience to the stern fiat,
 No matter if he can, or if he can't—
 So like a footman runs the wealthy slave,
 Clutching some gilded bait, to prison or a grave.

LVIII.

There on a hanging rock beyond the lawn,
 And leaning on a crag that stood beside,
 The rosy Goddess through the op'ning dawn
 Beheld a naked Savage in his pride ;
 As he looked out upon the foam below,
 And saw an endless view of ceaseless strife—
 Such even he had been compelled to know,
 The fitful happiness of stormy life—
 The night had passed—A Voice had come and gone,
 The Lodge of Rushtaboo was blank and lone.

LIX.

He stood as if he cared not where he stood,
 And looked as if he knew not what was done ;
 His whole communion with an inward flood,
 His only converse with the Vision gone.

* * * * *

Apollo's coursers where the Orient lay,
 Heaved through the golden wave a glorious day ;
 And gilded dolphins sported through the bay,
 In beams that sparkled as they dashed the spray ;
 Each Sylvan songster charmed the fragrant spot,
 But all was lost to him—he knew it not.

LX.

* * * * *

'Twas then to conscious ears the mellow horn
 Was heard to float along the thrilling air;
 As chaste Diana broke the early morn,
 And roused a wild boar in his hungry lair:
 With gnashing tusks, and bristles like a tree,
 He on his haunches kept the dogs at bay,
 Against the Huntress of the Gods—But she
 Dispatched a dart on its resistless way,
 Striking the beast within a flashing eye,
 And sent him headlong through the noisy sky.

LXI.

The blinded animal, in foam and rage,
 Was roused to miracles of matchless deeds;
 In which the Goddess and her dogs engage,
 But he seemed running to Apollo's steeds—
 And so he was, regardless what appears,
 Could he escape the Huntress and her hounds—
 The dogs arriving clutch his shaggy ears,
 And all with crazy zeal, and deaf'ning sounds,
 Rushed with their uproar on the frightened team,
 And left the world to darkness and to dream.

LXII.

Meantime the Clouds with all their blackest lower
 Were rolling past each other in their haste,
 To make and seize upon the darkest hour,
 And bury hope beneath a hopeless waste:
 Down, down they shut till darkness was alone—
 Nature was hushed to terror and suspense,
 And soul and body scarcely knew its own:
 When Lightnings leaping, frightful freaks commence—
 Then Clouds were stabbing Clouds, and crash on crash
 Broke from the elements at ev'ry gash.

LXIII.

The slain boar lay in all his huge black bulk,
 Before the snorting steeds that hugged the wheels ;
 While wounded dogs behind their mistress skulk,
 And she lamenting all her brother feels—
 Quick as the thought her horn's peculiar note,
 Away upon the helping air was heard,
 And ere the answering echo ceased to float
 Diana's Deer came sailing like a bird—
 Four stately Deer, all harnessed to her Car ;
 With silver sheen quick bounded from afar.

LXIV.

But power was not in both the gods to lift
 That pond'rous carcass up the silver seat,
 And to the axle with an instant shift
 They bound with Dian's zone that mass of meat—
 Diana took the car, and seized the lash,
 But slow and steady with a coachman's sleight—
 And see—she moves—and now away they dash,
 Apollo coursing with his former light :
 The dogs—some limping—whine and bark behind,
 And all earth trembling with a scart mankind.

LXV.

About that time the lightnings ceased their strife,
 The clouds retired below the azure field ;
 And anxious Nature ventured back to life,
 When all Apollo's glory was revealed.
 The terrors past— * * * * *
 * * * Behold the savage stands,
 Aroused to admiration of the sight—
 Has seen the darkness burn with folded hands—
 Stood on the brim of ruin with delight—
 He turns—an oak lays where his lodge has been,
 And scarce a fragment of his hut is seen.

LXVI.

He sought upon the offered trunk relief,
 Reckless as it of what the storm had done—
 Was then installed of ten great tribes the chief,
 Yet there he sat on that crushed tree alone—
 The tardy Years had just perfected him,
 And showed in triumph what their care had grown—
 Council and War had both elected him,
 And yet the hunter brave sat there alone—
 There was he musing o'er the tumbling sea,
 And mourned a people in eternity.

LXVII.

One Month with clotted beak and gloomy wing
 Had slain his kindred friends, and ruthless flown ;
 All they in hunting-grounds with spirits sing,
 But he restrained to live and hunt alone—
 His sire had led the Counsel of the Wise,
 And shot the swiftest arrow of the Brave ;
 He saw him rot, and rot before his eyes,
 And laid him in the wolf's deserted cave—
 Before he careless sought the hunt or fight ;
 But now compelled prepares to wield his right.

LXVIII.

His thoughts retracing search the backward trail,
 To scenes he could not and he would not smother ;
 And all his truant waywardness bewail,
 Where he had thoughtless wronged the kindest mother :
 That mother crazy with a fevered brain,
 He'd seen his tribe regardless pass and shun ;
 He'd watched her writhing in contagious pain,
 And so she left an unforgiven son :
 He knew her love had pardoned ev'ry wrong,
 But would have heard it from a mother's tongue.

LXIX.

His brother was his elder, and he took
 The cares that now to youth the Fates deliver ;
 Who seem to launch upon a shallow brook
 A bark that needs the current of a river ;
 His eye was practised to the traps of men,
 He knew all arts of ambush and of game,
 He'd strike the grizzly bear though in her den,
 And conquer coming foes before they came ;
 True to the world and his, though often tried,
 True to all ties he suffered and he died.

LXX.

Death with the plague his burglar labors urge
 Among the mourners of that howling village,
 And hopes of love like wrecks beneath the surge
 Feed the wide jaws of his relentless pillage ;
 One only hope was left to Rushtaboo,
 But one bright spot in all the waste of life ;
 Whose angel-hand with his had labored through,
 To soothe the dying in that mortal strife ;
 Reckless of danger as she was of toil,
 A sister fated for the spotted spoil.

LXXI.

One hour to this rude world them both bestowed
 To pay the joyous pains of one fond wife,
 And from one breast the infant fluid flowed,
 To nurse them for the hopes and doubts of life ;
 Just like some rose-bush in a garden lawn,
 Where an expecting hand has set the root ;
 And where he hurries ev'ry early dawn,
 To watch the beauties that expanding shóot :
 So he—till spring was fresh and virtues blown,
 And then the rudest Death had mown her down.

LXXII.

Yearning, he knelt beside that dearest clay,
With all the torments stinging in his breast—
The last and brightest star extinguished lay,
His hope forgetfulness and Death his guest—
Death had no terrors left for his sad thought,
Life had no motive left for deeds of pride ;
He kissed Contagion on the wreck it wrought,
And wooed its ulcers as he'd love a bride—
Death—oh, thou mouldy monster !—go and see,
How mortals love thee in extremity.

LXXIII.

He raised the precious relic in his arms,
And bore her to the vault of ragged stone ;
Resigned his only treasure to the worms,
And knew the bitterness to be alone—
Then took his way toward the Sacred Fire,
By all revered within its ancient place ;
There guardian death lay grinning to inspire
A fearful shudder for a fated race—
The watchman rotting—not a spark was seen,
But dead cold ashes where the fire had been.

LXXIV.

That fatal omen left, he gazed around,
Where cheerful thousands recently had thronged ;
No mortal tread was there, or human sound ;
To silent Death and flight their deeds belonged—
His searching steps were urged through ev'ry street,
Through lodge and lodge explored his anxious way :
Saw naught but death and prints of flying feet,
Except some dogs that kept the wolves at bay :
Great chiefs lay there more friendless than the log,
Shunned by all kindness but their faithful dog.

LXXV.

His ear was pained, for it must understand,
 Where munching wolves were growling o'er their prey ;
 While others barked their sharp and short demand,
 Around some victim dying by the way :
 He seized the sea-shell's dedicated call,
 And urged its loudest notes o'er plain and hill ;
 A fire new consecrated cheered the hall,
 And glutted Death admiring ceased to kill :
 The heaps of dust were borne within the urn,
 And one by one the fugitives return.

LXXVI.

But few remained to mourn departed friends,
 The mourned and mourners all together lay.
 Traditions fail—no other fate descends,
 Where a whole village thus was swept away—
 Swift sinews fly to ev'ry banded tribe,
 For chiefs to meet on Kunadota Hill ;
 With full deliberation to prescribe
 A voice to speak the nation's union will ;
 The tribes were ten, and fifty came from each
 (Except the lost tribe) to that lofty beach.

LXXVII.

No tinsel there, but all that conclave host,
 Prompt to the time like breathing marble sat ;
 The centre vacant for the People lost,
 And Rushtaboo alone reposed on that.
 All eyes are scanning him, for they allow
 That ancient custom names him Chief of Chiefs ;
 Their focus glances pore upon his brow,
 Observe his bearing while they feel his griefs—
 His calm replying looks around explore them,
 And slowly stands in native truth before them.

LXXVIII.

“ You see me now the remnant of my race—
 But yesterday our lodge was full—To-day!—
 Now go and see them in their resting-place,
 And help me frighten carrion birds away.
 Great is the Spirit who presides above,
 His steps are seen from mountain-top to top :
 Whose tallest oaks the giants of the grove,
 Like withered weeds his crashing lightnings drop—
 What have they done to merit such a fate!
 And why! oh, why this Ruin of a State !

LXXIX.

“ I drifted in the whirlpool of my tribe,
 Where all of mine but me were gulfed and sank—
 A man may feel, but never can describe
 The pain of living when the soul’s a blank—
 I stood within the windfall tumbling down ;
 Yea, in the very track where ruin fell ;
 And hoped the next full gust would be my own,
 Yet here am I—must feel—but cannot tell—
 Contagion swept my last—I kissed it dry—
 But could not—No—Death would not let me die.

LXXX.

“ I know my Chieftain rights, and duty too :
 The first I now surrender—next will do—
 I give my vested Chieftainship to you—
 I strip myself of rank—I ask *you* who
 Shall sway direction o’er the Tribes combined,
 And lead us on to Wisdom, and Success ?
 That sway is yours to give—from me resigned—
 I will not reign by any gift that’s less—
 To-day consult, and Sovereign then proclaim ;
 Who leads our Tribes to Happiness, and Fame.

LXXXI.

Thus said, his beaver robe was gathered round,
 And with an easy grace the Chief retired ;
 The musing Council tranquil and profound,
 His lofty spirit honored, and admired.
 Behold the Ocean when the storms subside,
 With waves still rolling broad, and high, and deep ;
 So bosoms heaved along that swollen tide,
 As music charms though Sylphy fingers sleep—
 His Tribe's lost fate—his abdicated crown—
 His private griefs—His juvenile renown—

LXXXII.

These wove a sombre veil that few might lift,
 While shadows passed within their anxious thought ;
 Up o'er their consciousness mementos drift,
 Heaved on the waves that in their bosoms wrought :
 At last a Victor of a hundred years,
 Whose winters clustered on an active brow ;
 Yielding his fated friends some silent tears,
 As dews will vapor where the Thunders grow ;
 Like some dark cloud ascended grand and slow,
 And burst in rumbling eloquence below.

LXXXIII.

“ I've seen a hundred barren Winters freeze,
 But summers followed where the frosts had been.
 I've seen the leaves desert the naked trees,
 But seen them bloom again with fresher green.
 I've seen the Clouds forbid the Solar light,
 I've seen the dreadest Thunders rend the plain ;
 I've seen the blackest, and the keenest Night ;
 And all in splendid Happiness again.
 Then rouse to seize the break of coming day ;
 Freedom descends to light us on our way.

LXXXIV.

“ Receive with calmness from her Holy Hight,
The Angel Freedom with her balmy breath.
Election always was the People’s right—
She seems descending from the Car of Death.
Here at the base of our untold distress,
We find a gushing spring of Liberty :
Dig deep its fountain like our wretchedness,
And flow the stream to long Eternity—
Thus this Tornado as it clears away,
Will leave a happier and brighter day.

LXXXV.

“ And now of all our Tribes what man shall be
The Leader of our Nation’s Destiny—
I see no man convened but might be he,
And thoughts perchance are also turned on me ;
But all cannot—Some *one* must be our choice,
And least of all the candidates am I.
Our ballots tried will speak the general voice,
But for my age—My business is to die—
Then who propose—for this my years may do,
And though in Youth my voice were Rushtaboo—

LXXXVI.

“ For I remember when a boy so high,
With smooth, unplucked, and but twelve summers’ chin ;
Alone he met a cougar fierce and sly—
Who has not seen him wear the conquered skin ?
And when that trackless Brave his feat had done,
That bore a virgin to the foreign main ;
That cougar skin attacked the setting sun,
And gave the maiden to her friends again—
Who has not seen, and seeing has not blest
The youth who wears that proud scalp on his crest ?”

LXXXVII.

The old man closed, and like a Polar Star
 The name he mentioned beamed to ev'ry soul :
 Approved in Wisdom, Courage, Chase, and War,
 The heart's quick compass settled to the Pole :
 And like a ship with grand and gentle float,
 At anchor riding with her canvas furled ;
 Until she bears the Captain's waited boat,
 When out she opens to a gazing world—
 So that grave Council waited to behold,
 And hear the Chief his future plans unfold.

LXXXVIII.

And thus he said—“Great Chiefs, I dread to take
 The broad command your favor would bestow :
 From that ascended loft you bid me make,
 Who dares to look upon the years below !—
 I've seen a squirrel cross the glassy lake,
 And seen his image as they gently float ;
 But when the dashing Winds that image break,
 The little sailor finds too frail a boat—
 Years may blow high, and rend my feeble oar,
 And leave me sunk, or beached along the shore.

LXXXIX.

“ I have no promises—My heart believes
 Its best blood labors for our Country's weal,
 And hopes to guard the Glory it receives,
 And cannot tell the gratitude I feel :
 But promise mantles on the putrid pond,
 Whereon the silly child a pastime makes ;
 When at a drowning depth he breaks the bond,
 And leaves it sinking with the slimy snakes—
 I take the trust, but tremble as we go
 At all the doubts my nature makes me know.

XC.

The Council is dissolved—but Rushtaboo
Permits the lonely Night to curtain round him.
He can bear wretchedness, but feels it too—
Such our hero—here the place we found him.

* * * * *

Now, oh World! I humbly bow before you,
Admit your potency to save, or kill.
I will not say that yet I much adore you,
But if you speak the word, I drop my quill.
I grant you rule the Literary Sky,
Can bid our hero live, or bid him die.

XCI.

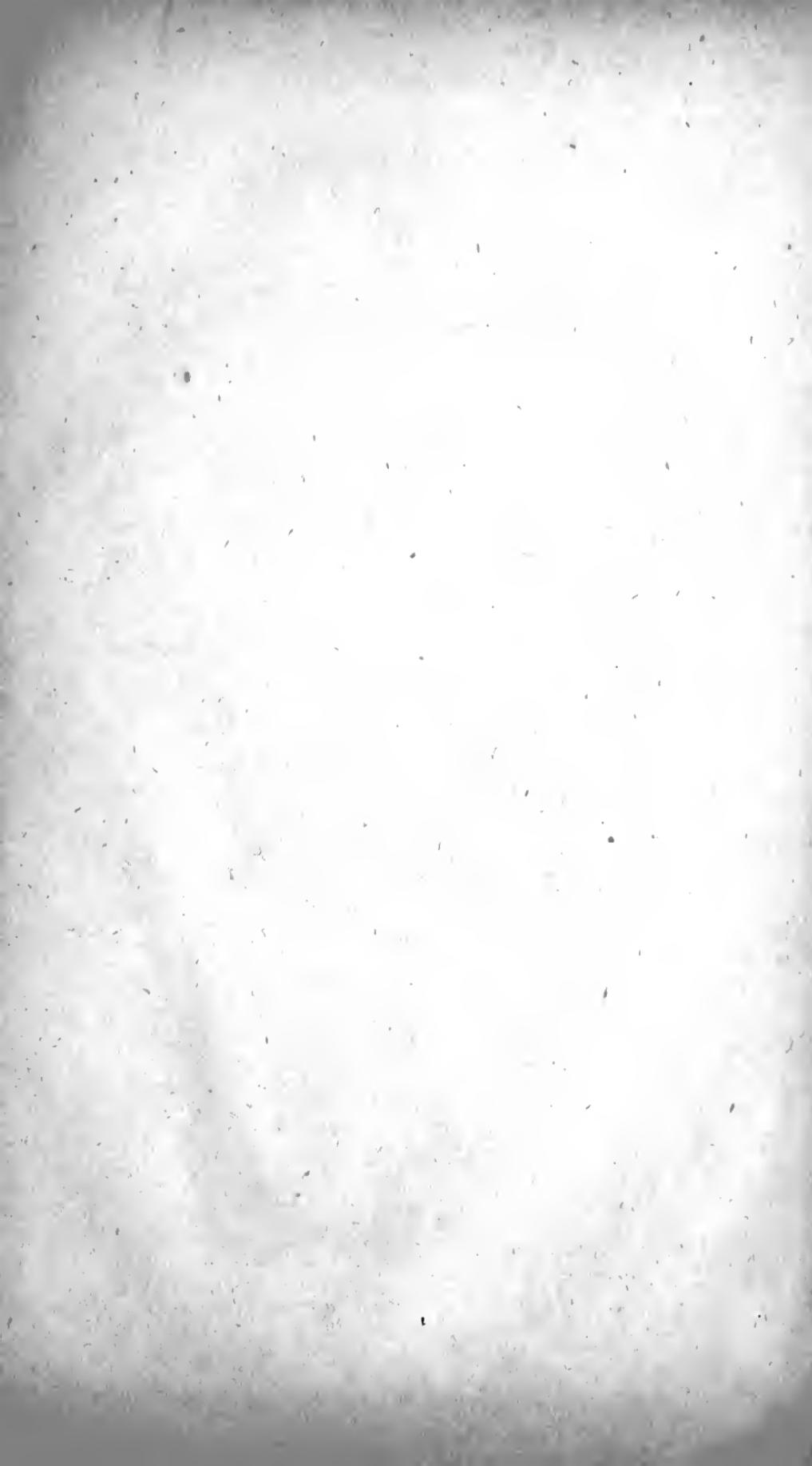
Here my Pegasus begins to pant so,
(I wish the Pony had a better name)
You'll suffer me to close this op'ning Canto;
Though I admit that I am much to blame—
To leave the Savage there so near the sea,
With ready access to that beetling shelf;
For if he fears a Public frown like me,
Before he knows his fate he'll kill himself;
And should you grant my Poem may be read,
Your boon may find the Chief and Poet dead.

N O T E S .

¹ America possesses a wonderful voracity for foreign literature, and leaves her own spirits to hang their harps upon the willows.

² I believe the Muses sometimes prefer Mount Helicon—it and Parnassus are only two links of the same chain.

³ If a wife commit adultery she forfeits her right to dower, yet it is only a short time since (in Great Britain) if a guilty widow rode into court on a BLACK RAM, she was restored—not to her virtue, but to her land. However, in justice to the British fair, it must be admitted that the sable animal is now entirely out of fashion.





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